

Anxiety, stress and depression due to Coronavirus

The COVID-19 pandemic may be felt as a source of stress and anxiety by some people because it disrupts our lives; it confronts us directly with danger or a threat of death. These types of events can generate a strong emotional charge which, for some people, is difficult to control and can have psychological repercussions.

This particular and unusual reality could therefore affect people both physically and psychologically and it is natural to feel stress, anxiety or depression at certain times.

What is stress ?

Stress is a normal physiological response to an abnormal situation; it is an integral part of our lives. It allows our bodies to adapt to the many positive or negative events we experience. Stress appears and disappears on its own, whether or not we are in presence of stressors (for example: If you are stressed at work, but the stress diminishes in the evenings or on weekends, you may have stress related to your work).

What is anxiety ?

Unlike fear, which is a response to a clear and real threat, anxiety is a response to a vague or unknown threat. Anxiety occurs when we believe that a dangerous or unfortunate event may occur and we anticipate it. Each person may experience anxiety in various degrees and intensity. The way they perceive the event will have a great influence on the intensity of the experienced anxiety.

What is depression?

Depression is a temporary state of weariness, discouragement and sadness. Depression can manifest itself in different ways, both physically and psychologically, and its intensity varies from one person to person.



Possible stress, anxiety and depression related events:

Reactions of stress, anxiety and depression are different for each person and have various levels.

On the physical level :

- Headaches, neck tensions, gastrointestinal problems,...
 - Sleeping problems
 - Decreased appetite
 - Decrease in energy, tired feeling
- Etc.

Psychologically and emotionally:

- Concerns and insecurity in relation to the virus
 - Feeling overwhelmed by events, helplessness
 - Having an inner discourse that is not always in touch with reality
 - Negative view of things or daily events
 - Presence of discouragement feelings, insecurity, sadness, anger
- Etc.

On the behavioural level:

- Concentrating difficulties
 - Irritability, aggressiveness
 - Cries
 - Isolation, withdrawal
 - Difficulty making decisions
 - Increased use of alcohol, drugs and medication
- Etc.

Coping strategies

All of these stress and anxiety related events are normal in the context of a pandemic. You probably all have your own strategies for coping with this new reality, for example by keeping in touch with friends and family,...

For others, however, the pandemic disrupts their routines and causes them to abandon activities that have a beneficial effect (such as exercise) in favour of activities that may have negative effects (e.g., increased alcohol consumption).



Here are some tips that may help you. You may need to adapt them to your personal situation, your personality, where you live, your surroundings and your culture. Don't be afraid to be creative.

Get informed: Lack of information or fake news can increase these reactions.

Get informed from reliable sources of information, including

https://gouvernement.lu/fr/dossiers.gouv_msan+en+dossiers+2020+corona-virus.html

Beware of sensational news from unknown or dubious sources. Take the time to validate the information with official sources. While it is important to be properly informed, limit the time spent looking for information about COVID-19 and its consequences, as overexposure can increase your stress and anxiety reactions.

Structure your days:

Try to structure to your days by incorporating a routine. For example, getting up and going to bed at fixed times, defining precise work and relaxation time slots...

Take some time for yourself:

Practice a physical activity that allows you to evacuate your stress and eliminate your tensions, listen to music, take a hot bath, read, plan a time during the day when you will put all your electronic devices aside: phone, tablet, computer and do not consult social media.

Take care of yourself:

Don't stay in your pyjamas, but dress and make up as usual. Eat healthy and avoid sugar, fats and alcohol. Relaxation and meditation can help you reduce and manage your stress and anxiety. This could include meditation in the form of yoga or mindfulness exercises, reading books and watching online videos on relaxation and meditation, or engaging in activities that relax you.

Set your limits:

for example : refuse a task that you don't want to do and that isn't essential ; try to delegate and accept help from others (for example, ask the children to do the dishes).

What to do in case of distress?

Prolonging this unusual situation could aggravate your emotional reactions. You may feel more tired, feel overwhelming fears, have more difficulty performing your daily tasks, or develop an excessive fear of contagion. Your personal resources no longer allow you to manage your day-to-day concerns. Pay attention to these signs and communicate as soon as possible with the resources where you can get help.



Where to find help?

Do not hesitate to ask for help, contact friends or family members if you feel overwhelmed by the situation.

The School psychologists are listening to you. Don't hesitate to contact them at any time by email or via Teams.

Community resources or health professionals are also available:

Hotline psychological support at 8002-8080:

This telephone assistance is a multilingual psychological support service offered by qualified people. The hotline is reachable from 7 am to 11 pm, 7 days a week.

SOS DETRESSE at 45 45 45:

This online telephone help offers you anonymous and confidential psychological support. You can also contact SOS Détresse by email by logging on to www.454545.lu

Parental guidance (Elterentelefon) at 26 64 05 55 :

This telephone assistance offers listening, guidance on education or help in case of difficulties related to your children.

SLP : <https://www.slp.lu/fr/trouver-un-psy> :

You can request an appointment for a teleconsultation with a psychologist/psychotherapist by logging on to the SLP directory.